

GOOD TROUBLE

THE WASTE LAND



Sebastián Mejía, '17, *Série Quasi Oasis, Santiago du Chili*' (2012)

In 'Deep in Admiration', a lecture-essay on nature and writing, the late Ursula K Le Guin called for a rethink of how we relate to the natural world. The piece, which is collected in the recent anthology *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet*, argues for a new kind of poetic kinship. "Both poets and scientists are extending the rational aspect of our sense

of relationship to creatures without nervous systems and to nonliving beings," Le Guin states. "One way to stop seeing trees, or rivers, or hills only as 'natural resources' is to class them as fellow beings – kinfolk." The artists presented in this section have used various media to rethink our relationship with nature in the face of climate disaster. The results

are in turn poetic, painful, hopeful and heartbreaking. Art, like poetry, is one way "to save us from merely stockpiling endless 'information' that fails to inform our ignorance or our irresponsibility," as Le Guin argues. If facts cannot save us from destroying our relationship to the 'kinfolk' that surround us, then perhaps art can.

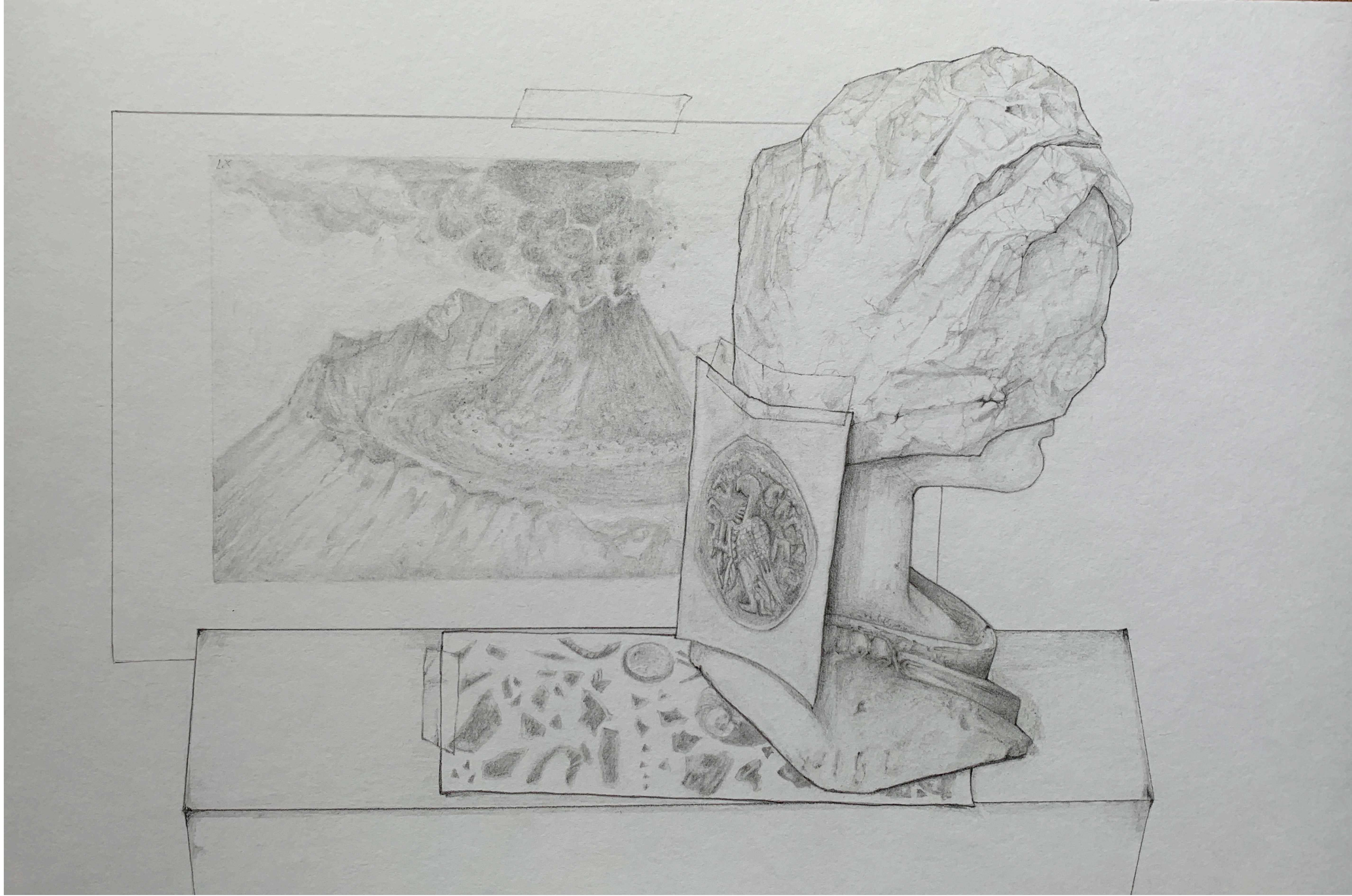
CURATION AND INTRODUCTION BY FRANCESCA GAVIN

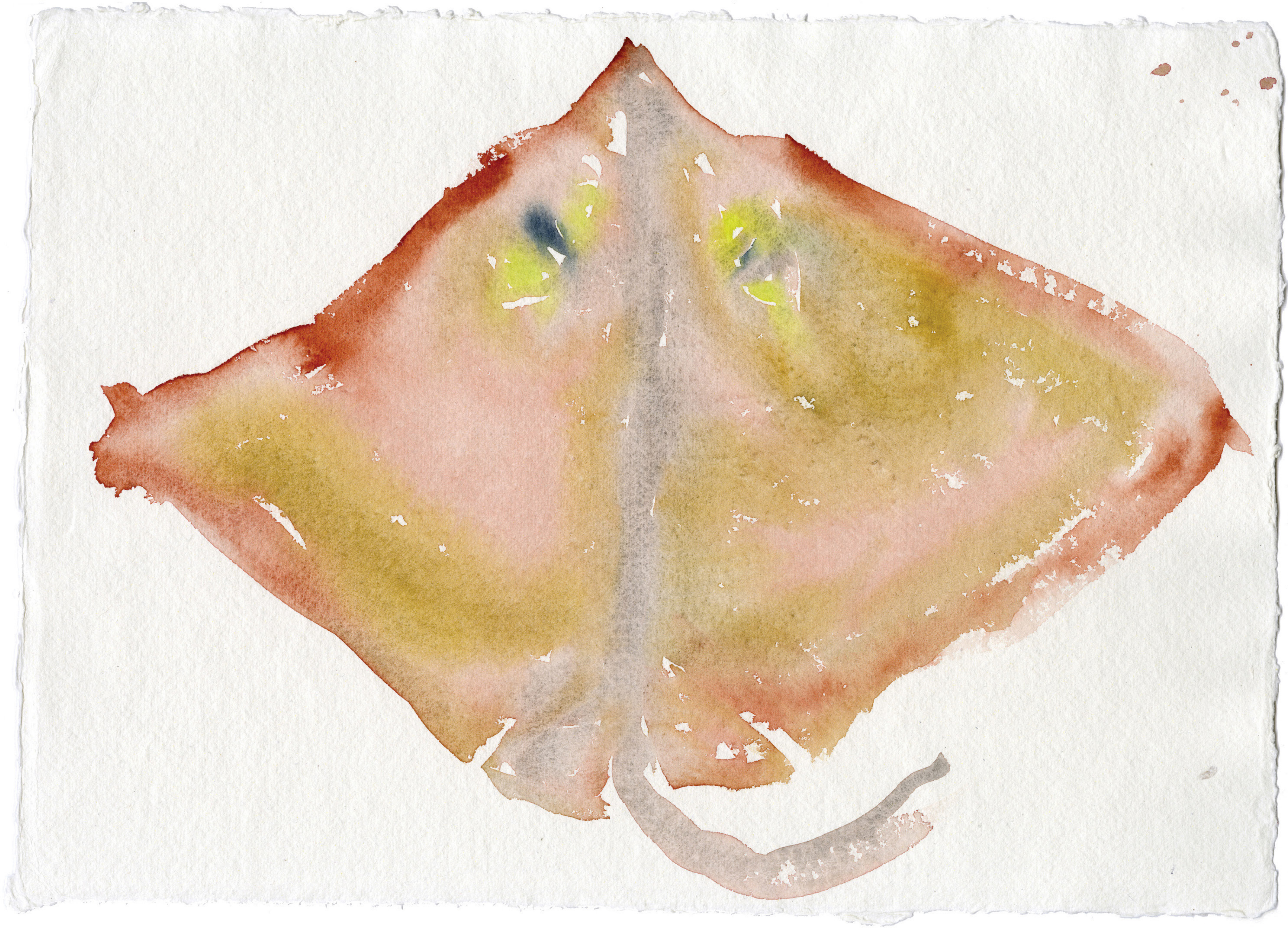


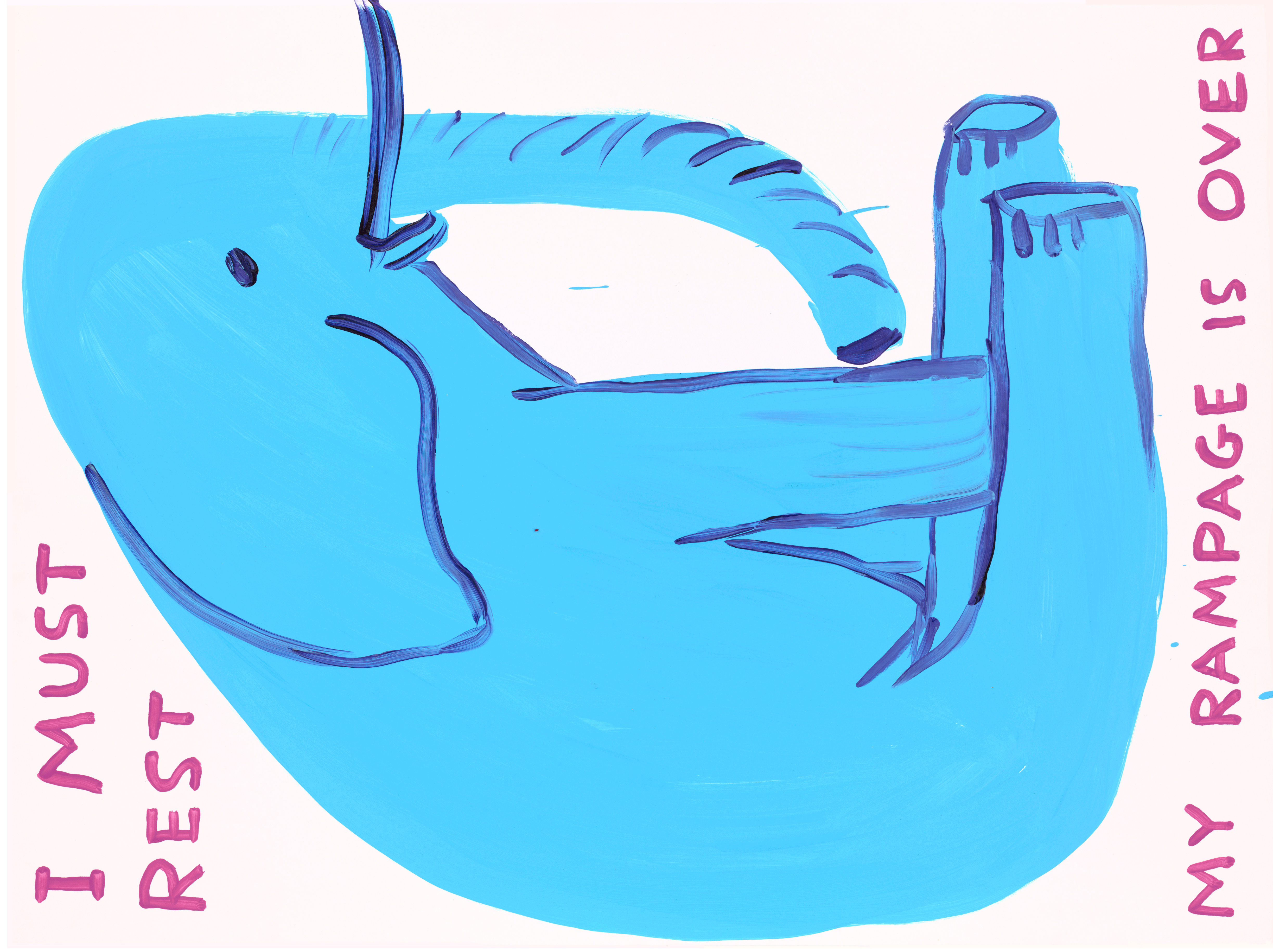














Joan Jonas, 'Moving Off the Land II' (2019)

Sebastián Mejía
'17, Série Quasi Oasis, Santiago du Chili' (2012)

Gelatin silver print, 50 × 40cm. Collection of the artist. © Sebastián Mejía

This image, from photographer Sebastián Mejía's Quasi Oasis series, is a wry statement on nature and man and the fragile relationship between the two. It was included in a 2019 exhibition at the Fondation Cartier, Trees, that raised question of beauty and biology against the devastating and dramatic increase of deforestation.

Heather Phillipson
'Mesocosmic Indoor Overture' (2019) (Detail)

Multi-screen video and sculptural installation. © Heather Phillipson

This piece depicts a disturbing digital future woodland where plants have taken over nature and humans are no longer the top of the food chain.

SKREI
'Biogas Power Plant' (2017)

Prototype: steel, lime, horse manure, clay, sand, cement, plaster, plywood, 200x150x150cm. Courtesy of the artists. Photography Lara Jacinto/SKREI

The Portuguese experimental architectural collective SKREI have a practice based firmly in the exploration of material. This image of a prototype biogas production plant was part of a design to explore how to operate without reliance on power supply and waste treatment systems. It was included in Eco-Visionaries: Art and Architecture After the Anthropocene at the Royal Academy of Arts in London.

Seana Gavin
'After the Floods' (2016)

Gavin's handcut collage work is part of series of works inspired by the four elements – earth, air, fire and water. Her sci-fi surrealist work depicts a post-apocalyptic landscape where nature has taken over and humanity is left struggling in its wake.

Andy Sewell
'Untitled 21', from series Known and Strange Things Pass (2019)

Known and Strange Things Pass is about the deep and complex entanglement of technology with contemporary life. It is about the immediacy of touch and the commonplace miracle of action at a distance – the porosity of the boundaries that hold things apart, and the fragility of the bonds that lock them together.

Rebecca Kressley
'Number 14' (2019)

Pencil on paper, 40 x 27cm

A 2017 article published by several authors titled 'Volcanic Suppression of Nile Summer Flooding Triggers Revolt and Constrains Interstate conflict in Ancient Egypt' was condensed via reposting over the internet to one idea – that Cleopatra's downfall was caused by climate change and volcanoes. Climate change has recurrently been an issue of economic inequality and imbalance of power that leads to political unrest, from Ptolemaic Egypt until now.

Joan Jonas
'Moving Off the Land II' (2019)

© Joan Jonas, Moving Off the Land II, 2019

This drawing and still were taken from a commission by the Ocean Space, a public project spaces founded by TBA21-Academy in Venice. Jonas's drawings, sculptures, video works and performances explore the biodiversity of the sea and the role it plays in spiritual, totemic and ecological culture.

David Shrigley
'My Rampage Is Over' (2019)

Colour screenprint with a varnish overlay on Somerset Tub Sized 410gsm paper, 56 x 76cm, for Jealous Gallery

Glasgow-based artist David Shrigley's work blends humour and horror, often consisting of fragments of conversation he hears or creates. Elephants are invaluable to biodiversity of savannah ecosystems. Their present endangerment is due not only to the ivory trade and trophy hunters but the lack of available food due to climate change, which causes many to starve to death. There are only around 40-50,000 Asian elephants and 410,000 African elephants now left in the wild, and numbers have dropped dramatically over the past three generations.